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LIBRARY

for giving me this opportunity to share with you some of our ideas regarding the development of Library and Information Services to Indian Bands and Reserves.

Let me say, first of all, that we do not separate this area from the other areas of Indian development.

INDIAN CONTROL  
It is directly related to, and should be designed to support, Indian initiatives in every other area -

## INDIAN INFORMATION

Whether that be economic development,

Social Services,

Education,

Community Planning,

Treaty Rights,

Land Entitlements.

The development and recognition of the jurisdiction of Indian Band Government or any other related area.

## AN ADDRESS

TO

Naturally, the Band Councils, the Indian Band Governments themselves,

## THE CANADIAN LIBRARY

must have ready access to reliable, accurate and up-to-date information if they are going to make good decisions.

## ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

But, it's just as important,

Maybe even more important,

That the Band membership have access to the same information.

Because, if they don't,

If too large a gap exists between the information which the Band Council has access to and the information available to the band members,

There is a danger that the decision-making process will become too isolated from the band membership.

BY:

Chief David Ahenakew

Federation of Saskatchewan Indians

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If too large a gap exists between the information which the Band Council has access to and the information available to the band members,

There is a danger that the decision-making process will become too isolated from the band membership.

They may begin to feel alienated from the decisions of the Band council and come to view the decisions of Indian governments with as much suspicion as they view the decisions of Non-Indian governments.



We can't afford to let that happen if we want real Indian development to take place.

Therefore, we say that Indian control of Indian Information is every bit as important as control of education, economic development, health services, and so on.

In Saskatchewan, we have taken certain steps, certain initiatives to begin to make the goal of Indian control of Indian information a reality.

We have recognized that we need a much more comprehensive approach than simply establishing a functional school library system or a functional public library system - or both.

We must develop a system which will attempt to serve all - or most - of the library and information needs of Indian bands and their governments.

At present, we have established three libraries under the direction of the 68 chiefs of Saskatchewan.

One of these is located in Regina at the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College which is federated with the University of Regina.

A second is operated in conjunction with our Treat Rights and Research program and is located in the F.S.I. office in Regina.

The third, and the largest of the three, is located at the Saskatchewan Indian Cultural College in Saskatoon.

This is a combination University, school, public and special library.

This library serves university students, community college students, schools, the Indian public and F.S.I. staff.

About  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the lending from this library is to schools across the province.

The library is unique in that it combines all these roles

- public library
- school library
- university library - and
- special library -

into one institution.





In most areas, these functions are all separated into different libraries.

The Cultural College library is also involved with assisting in the establishment of libraries in all schools on reserves.

The establishment of libraries in On-reserve schools quite naturally leads to the development of school-housed public libraries.

And, that leads us to the next major priority we have set in the development of comprehensive Indian information services.

This is the establishment, either within or in connection with the school-housed public libraries, of band resource and information centres on the reserves.

Such centres will disseminate vital information to Indian band governments and to band members;

Information on the things that affect their lives - in the present and in the future;

Information on Indian government, Indian jurisdiction, treaties, education, economic development, government documents, F.S.I. and N.I.B. documents and every other area affecting Indians.

This scope will eventually be expanded to include information on all aspects of Indian languages, history and culture and all aspects of Indian life.

As the centres grow and develop, audio-visual collections will also become a vital part of their service.

Band employees will be trained and hired to staff the Resource centres and to make sure information is available to all band members.

We feel that Band Resource Centres, integrated with our current F.S.I. library system, are the best and only means by which Indian bands can keep themselves informed about current issues of direct concern to the reserves.





No other library or information service is or can serve these primary objectives.

We are talking about band-initiated and band-controlled programs to provide access to all the information impacting on Indian communities.

We believe that the Resource Centres are the key to the development of a total information system controlled, established and delivered by Indian people themselves.

The Centres will utilize a consultation and feedback process for acquiring and providing information to people on reserves.

At present, resource people are called upon to provide information on Indian issues.

Indians provide feedback, and, through a continuation of this process, information grows.

However, now Indian people are aware of the existence of Indian information and they want direct access to it.

The establishment of a network of Band Resource Centres will reduce Indian reliance on resource people.

Indian people will be able to get the information they need; read it, discuss it and reach their own conclusions.

They will be more informed on issues and areas of concern to Indians.

They will then make better and more direct use of resource people, bringing their skills to bear on the concerns and issues defined by the Indians.

We must not lose sight of our long, hard struggle to have our say in our affairs and to determine our own future.

We must have records of these struggles, of our leadership, of the people who supported our leaders and of those who sought to undermine us.

Through the Band Resource Centres, each band will be able to acquire this kind of vital information and it will add to Indian understanding of who we are as a people.



Pride of heritage is one of the most powerful incentives to the great and noble efforts on the part of Indian people and groups.

In this, as in all of our activities, we must be guided by Indian purpose and structures, by clear definitions of priorities, roles and areas of jurisdiction.

But, there are some necessary first steps that must be taken.

First, there are not enough Indians with specialized training in this field.

At the cultural college, we have one of the few qualified Indian librarians in the country and 2 of the few qualified Indian library technicians.

The greatest need, at this time, is for the library technicians to develop and staff the band resource centres.

We are currently moving to establish such a training program through our Saskatchewan Indian Community College which has jurisdiction over and a mandate for all adult, vocational and technical training on Saskatchewan reserves.

A second area of need is for professional training in library science.

With the establishment of our own Indian-controlled and operated federated college at the University of Regina, we now have an opportunity to do something about this area as well.

And we are moving to establish a B. Ed program with a major in Library Science.

It is our intention to structure both these programs - the technical and professional - in such a manner that - for those who wish to go on - the two years of training as a technician will be accepted as the first two years of the B. Ed. program.

In addition, there is a need for us to establish, at the Cultural College a centralized developmental unit.

Such a unit would provide cataloguing and consulting services to bands establishing or operating libraries and resource centres.





We have initiated negotiations to identify and secure this kind of unit.

It is also desirable and necessary for the department of Indian Affairs to play a larger role in this area than it has to date.

My education staff have begun negotiations, with the department, to attempt to have a Library Consultant placed on the education staff of each District Office.

All of these steps are necessary if we are going to place the development and delivery of comprehensive Indian information services on a firm foundation.

Which brings me to a recommendation for this organization -

There are now more and more people involved - right across the country - in collecting, cataloguing and distributing Indian information for Indians.

It seems to me that there is a need for more communication than is afforded by a committee meeting once-a-year.

I would like to recommend therefore that you give serious consideration to establishing, under the jurisdiction of Indian governments, a national network of Indian library and information specialists.

I will certainly commit the efforts of my staff, and the organization I represent, to support and assist such an undertaking.

Before I close, I want to remind you that the staff of our Cultural College Library has set up a display and you are all invited to stop by for a chat.

They will also be showing the film made by the Cultural college audio-visual staff during the Treaty Six Commemoration year - in 1976.

I hope that all of you get a chance to see it.

We are prepared to answer any questions you may have and, in that respect, I will ask our Indian Librarian, David Sparvier to respond to questions on technical matters while I attempt to deal with the policy and jurisdictional issues.

Again, thank you for inviting us and we wish you the best in your conference and in the future.

Thank you.

Date Due

FEB 23 '82

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19/06/78

AHENAKEW, David

AUTHOR

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